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HENRY WARD BEECHER.

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FAITH IN PRAYER.

I shall speak on the scene, a description of which I read in your hearing, as a part of the opening service this evening. It is recorded by two of the Evangelists—Matthew and Mark. It is not mentioned by either Luke or John. You will find it in the 15th chapter of Matthew and the 7th chapter of Mark, respectively. It is a scene which may be called the interview of Jesus with the Syro-Phenician woman. It took place, probably, about four or six months previous to Christ's crucifixion. It was therefore during the last part of the last year of the Saviour's life.

You know that Christ's ministry was pivoting upon Capernaum, which, after his rejection by the Nazarenes, became his second home, and his permanent residence. He was accustomed to make circuits. Several of them may be distinctly traced. Some say that there were three grand circuits. Others make four or five. It is probable that the number is far greater than any have computed. His custom was not dissimilar, in this respect, to the customs of the teaching rabbis of his own people. He used to go out and take a line of villages, passing on, from day to day, instructing and performing works of mercy until the circuit was completed, and he returned home again. In that way he traversed the north and the south parts of Palestine. But very little record is made of his visiting the western coast. He seems to have gone but one single time (and that was the time on which I am commenting) north of the boundary line. In this instance he went up to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. We must not interpret *coast*, as used here, to mean sea-coast, and suppose that he went on to the Mediterranean. It is the boundary line that is meant. It is doubtful whether it can be so construed as to mean that he entered into the provinces in which Tyre and Sidon stood, though it is probable that he did. He went out of his ordinary circuit, and penetrated far to the north, into the province, [probably on the eastern side of it], in which Tyre and Sidon stood.

It is said that multitudes thronged about the Saviour; and it is very evident that vast numbers accompanied him wherever he

SUNDAY EVENING, May 26, 1872. LESSON: Mark VII: 24—30. HYMNS (Plymouth Collection): Nos. 639, 855, "Shining Shore."

went. It was a great inconvenience for many reasons; and for some reasons it was very dangerous; and for still other reasons such excessive crowds were obstructive. That is, they hindered the main object of his mission. From the record here he evidently sought to take himself out of the whirling crowd, and entered into a house, and would have no man know it; but he could not be hid.

You should recollect, in the first place, that he was in a strange country. We are not to suppose that we know all the circumstances, by any means. We do not know what foreign jealousies and what suspicions existed. Being a Jew, he brought with him such elements of disturbance as were likely to make trouble. If there were conjunctions of circumstances which made the magistracy suspicious of his intrusion, there might be reason in that why he should not desire such excessive publicity. More than that; we may suppose, what we know was true, that after days of excessive teaching he was wearied and over-spent. The whole crowd of men looked on him, each one feeling, as it were, that he only did so. It is one thing for a thousand people, each one for himself, to see one man, and another thing for one man to put himself in communication with a thousand people, or a multitude. The crowd scarcely thought of our Saviour's weariness or his convenience; but he felt the power of the pressure, and he might well desire to hide himself.

Moreover, this was in the very heat of the conflict which had raged during the last six months of his life on earth. The bitter jealousy of the Pharisees, and their seeking to entrap him, threw upon him the necessity of extreme caution; and his injunction, when he had healed a person, or performed a wonderful miracle, was, "See thou tell no man. Go home to thine house and to thy kindred." He desired to quench the rising enthusiasm of the people. There was danger in it.

More than that, there was in these crowds a great deal of mere secular curiosity. There was foam without substance. And it became necessary, even for spiritual reasons, that he should in some degree check this effervescence.

It was when he was retiring into a house, that the heathen woman heard of his presence. She is called a Greek. It probably is not meant that she had Greek blood. The term *Greek* was used to discriminate between the Jews and foreigners. They were called Greeks who were not of the Jewish nation. Everything outside of the party of the Jews was considered as Greek. She was a Syrian woman; and, among the Syrians, she was of that special stock to

which was given the name *Phenician*. She was not of the Carthaginian stock, but of the Phenician stock in Syria. She was a Gentile woman. She was not a Jew. And not being a Jew, it did not make any difference what she was. But she had heard of the Saviour, and she had followed him, evidently, before he went into the house, and besought him with great importunity.

"And behold, a certain woman of Canaan, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came out of the same coasts [that is, the same region], and fell at his feet, and cried unto him, and besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David. My daughter is greviously vexed with a devil."

There is something very affecting in this. In the first place, she was a woman; and the whole narrative shows that she was a superior woman. She had not only deep affections, and self-sacrificing affections, but she had moral intuition. She had a presentment or feeling within her that this was an extraordinary personage—a man sent from God; and before she saw him she had the feeling, "This is the Deliverer of my child"—for she seems to have lived for her child, and not for herself. It is a great thing for a great-souled person to plead for another; but when a woman's enthusiasm pleads, when the self-sacrificing love of a woman pleads, there is mystery in such pleading; and who shall withstand it? But when the woman is a mother, and when to her natural affection is added all that power and intensity which come from the love of her own child, who can withstand the eloquence of her pleading? And when that child is a daughter, and the mother's heart kindles, and her fervor of love glows, what can withstand that? If it were only sickness it would not be so bad; but when the child not only is sick, but is the victim of a demoniac possession; and when, worse than that, it is an unclean demon that possesses the child, who is the pride and the joy of her life, the object of her hope, and all that she had imagined for the child is blighted, and the mother pleads under the pressure of all these painful circumstances, who can withstand her importunity? The veil is drawn over the details and particulars, and the child is shielded, as it were, from prurient curiosity; but it was a mother whose daughter was beset by the unclean devil, and she heard of Christ, and followed him in the way, and besought him with tears, yea, and cast herself abjectly down on the ground, after the manner of the Orientals, as it were taking him by the feet, saying, "I beseech thy help. My daughter! my daughter!" Could anything resist that?

It is one of the most extraordinary things in the whole Gospel

narrative, that our Lord listened to this appeal without a flush, without a change of feature, and without a word. He sat perfectly still, and she poured out more than the precious ointment. It was more than the alabaster box that was broken. It was a heart that was broken, and was pouring upon him its pleading entreaty. And he answered not a word. Dumb and cold was he. So misers, called men, when those who are suffering the pangs of hunger plead before them, sit and hold their treasure, and bar the gates leading to their mercy and pity, do they not? But was he a miser of mercy? Was he hard-hearted? Did he not care for all this? The disciples thought not. His attitude was such, and his manner was such, that they really thought he was disgusted and annoyed by the importunity of this woman. And they came and said to him, "Send her away; she crieth after us. It is disgraceful; it is annoying; it is vexatious." They took this idea, evidently, from his appearance, and thought he was ready for it, and wanted it, himself.

I think his reply to them is quite as mysterious and strange as his cold conduct toward her.

"I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

That the Jews should think that their country was *the* country of the world, and that God never thought of anything but Judea and Palestine, was natural. In that respect they did not differ materially from any other country on the globe. Every nation feels that God thinks of it first and all the time. So the Jews felt. Therefore, when the Saviour said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," the import of his reply seemed to be: "My special mission is to the Jews. If there are any Jews let them come. As for this Syro-Phenician woman, this Gentile, she must wait." So the disciples were on trial too, as we shall see.

But she was not to be put off in this way. It is not easy to quench a fire that is fed with such fuel as hers. She had watched too long. She had had too many days of misery, and too many nights of anguish. The iron had gone too far into her soul. What did she care what people thought of her? What did she care what he thought of her? Her feeling was only this: "If there is power in importunity, my child shall be healed."

"Then came she and worshiped;" that is to say, she made obeisance. It was not kneeling down to say her prayer to him. It was simply an act of prostration in recognition of his honorable standing and superiority.

The woman had stated her case. She had shown her desire. Her daughter was possessed of a devil, and she had pleaded with all

the vehemence which the circumstances were calculated to inspire. And Christ sat dumb, except that he cast a few words coldly at his disciples. But there was something, evidently, that she discerned; for she came and threw herself down again before him; and there never was a more royal oration pronounced since the world began than that which fell from this mother's lips, when, with all her soul, she said, "Lord, help me!" It needed no addition. It will bear no exposition.

Now begins the last stage of the drama—for this is the unfolding of a drama.

"Jesus answered and said unto her, Let the children first be filled."

Oh, bigoted Jew!

"It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it unto the dogs."

Oh, hard, cruel words! To say that to a mother, to say it to a woman, to say it to a woman in such distress, to say it to a woman in distress about her daughter, and her daughter afflicted by such an ignominious sickness—this was the dealing of Christ with her. "I cannot help you. You belong to the Gentile dogs. I am sent to the Jews. Go away."

That did not daunt her.

"Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the children's crumbs which fall from their master's table."

O power of humility! O conquering power of meekness! O invincibleness of a persistent love! That broke through, and Jesus effulged, and all seeming passed away; and then, with eye, with look, with gesture and with words, he said, "O woman! great is thy faith. For this saying go thy way. Be it unto thee even as thou wilt. The devil is gone out of thy daughter."

It seems that the child was healed while this was going on. While he was neglecting the mother, the message secretly went forth from him which effected the cure of the daughter.

Now, every one of you will ask, "Why was all this? Was it not strange?" No, I think it was very much like Christ's way; and I think I can very clearly perceive why it was. I think, too, that I can make it plain to you. It was not, I am sure, a want of sympathy. It is not necessary that I should argue that. It was not national bigotry. It was from Christ that the world learned true catholicity. It was not because he sympathized with the prejudices of the age, the Jewish prejudices, for he broke up those prejudices. He was oftentimes, himself, stoned or threatened with violence because he made known the liberal sentiments which have prevailed. We shall understand it a little better, I think, if we look at some other cases not unlike this. There is a

scene which is a counterpart of this case, in which a father brings to Christ his son, also possessed of a demon. He is put off in the same way. The father says:

"Master, I beseech of thee, look upon my son. He is my only child. Have mercy on him. I have brought him to thee. He hath a dumb spirit, and is sore vexed. The spirit taketh him, he suddenly crieth out, and wheresoever he taketh him, he foameth and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away. And the spirit, bruising him, hardly departeth from him. And I brought him and spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out, but they could not cure him."

One would suppose the presentation of this piteous case would bring an instantaneous cure; but it brought forth a rebuke.

"O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring thy son hither to me. And they brought him unto him. And when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell to the ground, and wallowed foaming. And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And oft-times it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him; but if thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us."

And still Jesus did not do it.

"Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

Just then it was that the spirit of faith and trust was developed in him. Then it was that Christ spoke the word, and the child was healed.

There was another scene which was, if possible, still more extraordinary. I refer to the case of Christ's dealing with those whom he loved with a personal affection. I mean the sickness of Lazarus, and the sending of Mary and Martha to him.

There was great persecution. Christ had gone down beyond the Jordan. Lazarus was sick unto death. The sisters sent to Jesus. He abode in the place where he was two days after the message came, and Lazarus died. Then, afterwards, he came to Jerusalem. You will recollect the memorable scene. It is too long for recital and comment here; but the fact was, that when word was brought to him that there was this sickness and sorrow in the house which had become so dear to him, he did not run, but waited, and waited on purpose, for two days. Still it all turned out right in the end—better than if he had made haste to heal the man.

What, then, may we understand to have been the reason why our Saviour so often delayed? You are to recollect, in the first place, that he was in danger of exciting, by the profusion of his mercies, mere curiosity. He was in danger of setting all the land afoam with wild excitement, so that the people would come thronging to him, as our people go to see Signor Blitz, or anybody else

that would do necromancer's work; and it was necessary to guard against that. Nay, there was danger of arousing the baser selfishness of men. He said to the multitude, once: "It was not on account of the miracles that you followed me; it was on account of the bread. You did not care for the miracles, but having had a good meal, you were after another." He saw that his ministration was in danger of being unto death. He saw that it might beget nothing higher than the spirit of the swine, that ate, and crunched, and ate, and squealed for more. If going through the land and performing, on the right hand and on the left, miracles of mercy, made the selfish yet more selfish, and the curious yet more curious, and the frivolous yet more frivolous, and the worldly yet more worldly, then his ministrations would not be desirable. He saw that it was necessary for men to have more than mere external help. He was not simply a philanthropist, relieving men from sickness. He was a philanthropist, to be sure, but his philanthropy was a means to an end. He was a spiritual teacher. He came into the world to give a new idea of manhood. He came to bring a new inspiration of power to the inward life. Here were men loving crowns, coveting scepters with power in them, building houses and furnishing them, and saying to their souls, "Eat, drink, and be merry." Here were men swayed by all temporal impulses. And Christ came to inspire a higher thought of manhood: not with power of genius in beauty, or order; not with power in legislation, or statesmanship; not with power in wealth. "Blessed are the pure in heart; blessed are the meek; blessed are the happiness-makers; blessed are you when men shall persecute you"—such were his utterances. He came to awaken in men's minds thoughts of a character transcendently greater than any external power of secular development.

Now, if he had proceeded in his works of mercy, knowing that men all the time were fed by their senses, and that the hungry had bread and nothing else, and that the sick had restoration and nothing else, he would have been playing into the temporality and secularity of men's lives. Therefore, you will find him all through his earthly life insisting that the temporal should be made to depend upon some kind of spiritual development. So, when an epileptic was brought to him, he said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." But that was not what the man came for. He came, not on account of his sins, but for something else. It was only after some of the Scribes murmured, and said within themselves, "Who can forgive sins but God only?" that Jesus said, "That ye may know that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins, I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk." The

healing was secondary. That was to come afterwards. First was to be spirituality, new manhood. Then was to come external renovation. In every instance, probably, *faith, hope,* was made the condition, either overtly or impliedly, on which he performed these acts of mercy. Faith was that which he was attempting to teach by his kindness, by his restoring power, by his personal intercourse, by his whole influence. Whether it was hope, love, sympathy, rebuke or condemnation, still it was this one inward life that he was aiming at, and that he sought to inspire.

In the case of the Syro-Phenician woman—a woman of great courage and strength of mind—there was something more than the mere restoration of her child that was to be accomplished. Here was a light to be kindled. Here was to be a disclosure, both before the disciples, and in all the region round about. She was to be a witness for Christ. Here was to be a disclosure of more than natural affection. Here was to be brought out, by holding her back, a stronger faith and purpose, and not the impetuous purpose of a dominant will. There was to be brought out a sweet submission. She was to receive the pelting words, she was to endure the cold treatment, and she was to maintain all her sweetness of affection, and all her faith. She was not to be put off from her importunity, but her importunity was to take on more gracious forms. And when replying to her scornfully he said: "Dog, do you suppose you can have the children's bread?" she broke through it, and in all the sweetness of her faith said: "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table."

Ah! that was nobility. That was womanhood. That had immortality in it. There was that for which he had been looking.

Then he said to her: "O woman, great is thy faith. Go. It is done." The child was healed; but no more than the mother. The devil was cast out of the child; but no more than it was out of the mother. The child was brought back to the mother. Yes, and the mother was brought back to God. It was a double miracle that was performed. There was an inside one and an outside one; and the inside one was the more resplendent and glorious. Oh, dull-eyed and hard of heart are we, not to see the mercy of this transaction. I wonder that I ever stumbled over it.

Take the case of a child in the household. It is fractious, wayward, and vagrant in desire, and comes in contact with the parental authority. The mother sits firm, and deals with the child till her authority and chastisement, mingled with mercy and love, have subdued the child, and it yields to her, and is at peace. Is there a

more perfect peace to a child than that which is based on entire submission? If the mother had let the child have its own way, it would not have been half so happy as it is now that it has been broken in its will, and made to submit to its mother. It experiences that royal hour of relief which follows discipline. I am familiar with that. I know there is a sweetness in the hour which follows wrong forgiven, wickedness subdued, the devil cast out.

If, now, you will go through with this solution of the case under consideration, it will tend to throw light upon many passages of the Saviour's life. Why he delayed; why he seemed to carry himself in one way when really his heart was aiming in another way, is to be explained by the fact that he was, by external dealing with men, attempting to awaken in them a higher and nobler conception, and a higher and nobler inspiration.

I do not know what became of this Syro-Phenician woman. So far as history is concerned, the curtain fell, and her name is lost. One after another the most striking instances in the Gospel come up, we see them for moment, the light glows upon them, they sink back into darkness, and we hear no more of them. So there is no further development in regard to this woman; but I cannot doubt that in all that region round about she was a witness, as was the man of whom we spoke not many evenings ago, whose name was Legion because many demons had entered into him, and who, when healed, went back, in obedience to Christ's command, to his family and friends, and then, in the cities of Decapolis, made known, as the first missionary on record, the glorious gifts and grace of God. I do not doubt, though there is no record of it, that this great-hearted woman made a greater and more noble development of her royal faith in that region round about, to the praise and glory of God manifested in his Son, Jesus Christ.

I remark, in view of this narrative, first, that God's gifts are not to be measured by what they are outwardly, but by what they do for us inwardly. I suppose it is right for a man to thank God for all his prosperity. The old farmer, at the end of the season, when his barns burst with fullness, and his granaries are golden, and his cellar is stocked, and he has more than heart could wish, is accustomed to give thanks. He is all puffed up with selfishness, and is thinking of how much he shall make; not thinking of whom he shall relieve; not thinking of money to be given, but of money to be loaned; not thinking of mercy, but of interest on interest; not thinking of how he is made better, but of how he is made stronger and richer; and saying: "I am not any more dependent on that bank or that usurer. I own my farm and what is

on it, and I will sell my stock, and this fall I will have money out at interest. I began a poor boy, but now I am one of the first men in town, and I may be chosen to go to the Legislature. Thank God! thank God!" What has he to thank God for? He has grown prosperous; but his heart is harder than it was when he was dependent on those about him. He is neither generous, nor wise, nor manly, nor good. He is puffed up by secular blessings. What has he to thank God for?

Over against him is a man who had some little position, but who was disabled by sickness. His bright intelligence was dimmed, and that mysterious fitting together of things which we call "tact," "success," seems to have slipped away from him; and one little piece of property went after another, one little scheme failed after another, and he slid down from one point to another, until he is very poor. His old friends occasionally give him a visit of pity; and they talk about him and say, "That man promised well once; he was really a good fellow; but now he cannot do anything. He is one of those shiftless fellows that you meet here and there. Everything goes through his fingers, and he has lost pretty much all he had. And at last the poor fellow is almost a town pauper." He dies in that state; and men say: "Well, is it not lucky that he died? He would have been put up at auction for somebody to take care of him if he had lived."

In some places in New England they see who will keep the poor the cheapest. There is nothing like the ways in which charity will manifest itself! A miserable wretch—a pauper—is brought out, trembling, before the townsmen, and the questions are asked, "Who will take this man? and for how much?" And then the bidding commences. One man will take him at five dollars per month, another at four, and another at three. The man that bids the least, and the man that will keep the unfortunate creature the most scrimpingly, gets him. And what a good time the pauper must have of it! He dies, perhaps, just in time not to be put up at auction again; and everybody says, "Well, he is out of the way." And the rich farmer, on his way home from the funeral, says, "Now, boys, you must remember that we all shall die." And after supper, he says, "Jim, I want you to go, to-morrow, to the market, and see what the price of grain is."

What was the difference, in the sight of God between these two men? One died in poverty, from neglect, and almost in disgrace. But every time God's hand struck this man to knock off some of his property, he knocked off something of that which interfered between his soul and God's mercy. And then he struck

him again. As Michael Angelo used, under the power of inspiration, to strike off from the blocks of marble, as it is said, more chips in an hour than a workman could carry away in three, coming nearer and nearer to the statue which was imprisoned in that rough stone, and which was to be brought out; so God's blows, which drive off from a man's worldly prosperity innumerable chips and splinters, bring out the lines and lineaments of his figure as a man in Christ Jesus. The man's prosperity would have been his prison, so God made him poor on the outside; but he made him rich on the inside. He blinded him outwardly, that he might light up and kindle in him an inward life and power. As he went down by the outside he went up by the inside; and when he died the angels pleaded to be permitted to go on the sweet errand of taking that ransomed spirit up; and they bore it with music to its God; and the heavens glowed as the pauper went home to glory.

But the old, fat farmer died of apoplexy, and had to fight his own way. He had nobody to lift him up and carry him heavenward, and he sank in the other direction. How different is the fate of an ungodly prosperous man, and a godly unprosperous man!

God's mercies are to be counted, not on the outside, but on the inside. If they make you selfish, and hard-hearted, and unsympathetic, and you grow close, and separate yourself from your fellow men, and you are ungodlike in the proportion in which you are prospered, woe be unto you! If God's external mercies make you better, they are tolerable, If God's chastisements make you better, thank God for them. Those unfeeling words, that cold look, and that indifferent way of Christ—what a gush of feeling they brought out from this woman's soul! That pushing away—how it brought the pleading hands out, as it were! How it caused every tendril and fiber of her heart to clasp and cling to the Saviour, and made her refuse to let him go! It was out of the apparent winter of his face that her summer came. It was out of his repulsion that her blessing came. Any dealing that makes you better inside is beneficent. And do not feel when God is dealing with you severely that he has forgotten you. It takes a great while to answer some prayers.

One day an acorn looked up and saw an oak tree over it, and did not know that this tree was its father, and pleaded with Nature, saying, "Make me such an one as that." So the squirrel took it, and raced off with it toward his nest; and on the way he dropped it on a ledge where there was a little soil, and lost it. There it germinated, and its roots struck down. And after a year the little

whip cried, "I did not pray to be a little whip; I prayed to be like that oak tree." But God did not hear. The next year it grew and branched a little; but it was not satisfied; and in its discontent it said: "O Nature, I prayed that I might be like that voluminous oak, and now see what a contemptible, little, forked stick I am." Another year came, and the winter froze it, and the summer storms beat on it, and it tugged away for its life, and its roots ran out and twined themselves around rocks and whatever else it could get hold of, and fed on the hillside. So it grew and grew till a hundred years had passed over it. Then behold how on the hillside it stands firm, and defies the winter storms and tempests. Then behold how it spreads itself abroad, and stands an oak indeed, fit to be the foundation of a prince's palace, or the keel of a ship that bears a nation's thunder round the globe!

You cannot be transformed in an instant. You cannot be changed between twilight and sunrise. When, therefore, you pray that God will regenerate your nature, will you not give him time to do such a work? When you pray for the reconstruction of your character, will you not wait till God can perform such an act of mercy? If, looking at the interior, he sees that the work can be expedited, he will expedite it; but you must be patient.

See how many times this is pressed upon us. Call to mind, for instance, the case of the importunate widow, and the unjust judge who neither feared God nor regarded man, who was as bad as he could be, and whose posterity have come down to us. The widow said to him, "Avenge me of mine adversaries," and he would not for a while; but after a time he said: "Though I fear not God, nor regard man, yet, lest this widow by her continual coming weary me, I will avenge her of her adversaries." The Lord said, "Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, that cry day and night unto him, though he tarry long? I tell you that he will avenge them."

Time is in God's hands, and he stretches it out wide, and we think that we are forgotten, and that he has forgotten to be gracious. Wait upon the Lord. Trust him. Do good. And be not discouraged. Is your child vagrant? Pray for him; work for him; and then wait. Afar off may be the turning, and yet it may be there. Ere long you shall see it, though your eyes do not behold it now. Do not give up your hope. Wait patiently for your child that is possessed of a devil.

O mother! have you a daughter that has an unclean spirit? Jesus remembers you. Go to him as she of Canaan went. Go, though he be in the street. Hunt for him, though he be hid in

the house. Bow down before him, and plead. Do not be put away by his silence. The wonderful silence of God, if you only knew it, is full of promise and blessing. Yea, though he frown upon you and rebuke you, and things seem to grow worse and worse, hold on, and by and by he shall say, "O woman! be it unto thee as thou wilt."

From such instances as these, carried out in every direction, we get wine. These are precious clusters. We press them, and get from them juice, which we keep from day to day, to revive our hope.

Dear brethren, we all need help, and strength, and sympathy; but there is not one of us that has not help if we only know our liberty, and sympathy; if we only know that we have a High Priest who cannot but be touched by our infirmities, and who has gone into heaven, not to abandon us, but to stand at the source of all power, to bring sons and daughters home to glory.

Bring all your wants to Christ; and always bring them with a consciousness that for the answering of your prayer, the best of all persuasions and arguments is a heart that will be made better by having its petitions answered of God. It may be that you stand between your desires and God's mercies. Seek to keep the way clear between your soul and his. Go to him for what you need, and do not misunderstand him; do not doubt him; and wait patiently, and he shall make it plain here even, and more abundantly and gloriously plain hereafter.

PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

Thou hast been very gracious unto us, our Father. The voice of our supplication hath come up before thee. Thou hast answered us not according to the wisdom of our petition. Thou hast pierced beyond the outward blessing, and hast ministered to us spiritual things, building us up in treasure which shall be treasure hereafter. Thou hast withheld pain and sorrow. Thou hast bestowed blessings temporal without number; but above all thou hast enriched our souls, deepened our affections, purified our ambition, raised our aspirations, and taught us of ourselves. And though we do not see clearly; though it doth not yet appear what we shall be, nor what thou art, yet we know something, and the light thereof fills us with joy, and we gain hope, and await patiently the more glorious disclosure.

We know that we cannot yet receive that which is in store for us; we know that our reason is stronger than our heart; we know that we are more fruitful in thought than receptive in affection; we know that thou art not to be found by searching or reasoning; we know that we must come into thy likeness, into the greatness of thy nature, and that we must be transferred into more godliness before we can understand God. And we rejoice in thy chastisements if we view them in the light of thy truth. Thy severities as as well as thy mercies are all preparing us to have the divine nature, and to be made like unto thee, and to be filled with thy presence, and with the joy of thy salvation.

Now, Lord, we pray that thou wilt continue thy good work of grace in every one of us. Though we are turned aside from the right path, though we are dilatory, though we are even fractious and disobedient, be not weary of us. Thou hast been the author of our faith; be thou the finisher. Grant that we may be led, step by step, through experience after experience, that we may have all that sweetness which is interpreted by the benefits which we derive from thee. May our hearts become more gentle and more tender, and our spirits more humble and submissive to the divine will. May we rejoice in the Lord. May we not seek our joy alone in outward things. May we learn that high above all visible things there is a realm of joy where thou art. And may we have hope until we shall know how to rejoice in thee as thou art, and for what thou art, and in thy disclosures to us of thy Spirit in all those inward intimations and impressions which thou dost pour in upon thy children.

We pray that thou wilt deliver us from the fear of men, and from the seductions of ease. Deliver us from men's praise, which is praise for things secular, and is demeaning. May we love only that praise which exalts, and which is as a wind that is bearing us toward the heavenly land.

We pray that thou wilt fill us with the mind of Christ, that we may fulfill the Will of Christ, and become like unto him in all things. Wilt thou bless thy servants in thy presence according to their several necessities? Enter into each heart. Commune with each one. If there are any who are in sorrow, any who are in the midst of afflictions, any who are bereaved, any who are despondent, sitting in doubt and in darkness, arise upon them with healing in thy beams. We pray that thou wilt grant that those who are seeking thee, with their faces turned upward, and wistful, not yet realizing —not yet having apprehended, may find thee. Lead them gently. Speak to them words of cheer and hopefulness. We pray for those who are outcast. We pray for the degraded. We pray for those whose life seems to have stood still. Grant, we pray thee, that they may have a fresh call of God to hope and to endure. Grant that they may gird up their loins, and

again enter upon the conflict of life boldly, not trusting in their own strength, but in the providence and grace of God. We pray for the poor, and for those who are ignorant, and for those who are criminal, and for those who are beyond the reach of ordinary sympathy. May those who have the liberty and the time and the disposition, go forth to seek and save the lost, as did the Master. We pray that multitudes may be gathered in, and that thy name may be honored, and thy cause glorified in the salvation of men.

Spread abroad, we beseech of thee, thy truth in all this land. May the power of holiness subdue all the lusts of the flesh, and all the ambitions of ravening avarice, and the pride of power. May this great nation stand in justice. When impurity prevails, may it understand and sympathize with the divine counsels. May this nation be a benefactor of the weak, and a defender of them against the strong. And everywhere may its name be blessed by all those who look up and long for their emancipation. May it have sympathy with the struggling mass of men, and have faith in them. And may all the earth by its example be encouraged, and arise. May they hear the voice of the Master calling them through what he hath done in this land.

So hasten the day when all the nations of the earth shall have accepted the truth as it is in Jesus, and all of them shall be brought up from degradation into the full inheritance of that manhood which thou hast inspired, and which thou are producing. Let thy kingdom come, and thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.

And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be the praise ever more *Amen.*

PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Grant, we beseech of thee, our Father, thy blessing to rest upon the word spoken. Grant that we may discover in ourselves a law nourishing and inspiring. Deliver us from unbelief. Deliver us from desiring God's mercies for our own selfish using. Deliver us from wishing to make three tabernacles here for our own or for others' senses. Deliver us from failing to measure all that which remains of the suffering of the Lord Jesus Christ. May we count it all joy when we are permitted to suffer, that we may fulfill our errand, and that suffering, as fire upon gold, shall leave us seven times purified. We commit ourselves to thy will, who can care for us. As thou dost love thine own, and dost love them unto the end, and unto death, so love us. We commit to thee ourselves, our children, our children's children, all who are dear to us, and thy cause in all its forms. Thou hast taught us to pray, Thy kingdom come, and all our desires are to thee, and all of them return to thee. As the cloud falls to the earth, and the river goes back to the sea from which it was born, so all our good is of thee, and goes back to thee from whence it came. So grant that we may live in thee. So grant that by the power of thy hidden life we may triumph over life and over death, and through death come to immortality. And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be eternal praises. *Amen.*

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